

14 MARCH 2005



Services

AIR FORCE PROTOCOL

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OPR: HQ USAF/CVAP (Lt Col Kathleen Ryan) Certified by: HQ USAF/ILV (Mr. Arthur Myers)
Pages: 3
Distribution: F

This directive provides the policy for protocol, decorum, and customs and courtesies when conducting Air Force ceremonies, conferences, meetings, and social events; hosting distinguished visitors; and providing honors at military funerals. This directive applies to all Air Force, Air National Guard, and Air Force Reserve units and members. Send recommendations or comments to HQ USAF/CVAP using AF Form 847, *Recommendation for Change of Publication*. Ensure that all records created as a result of processes prescribed in this publication are maintained in accordance with AFD 37-1, *Information Management* and AFMAN 37-123, *Management of Records* and disposed of in accordance with the *Air Force Records Disposition Schedule (RDS)* located at <https://webrims.amc.af.mil>

1. Protocol is an integral part of the military and is essential in accomplishing the Air Force mission with dignity and official recognition. Protocol within the Air Force culture establishes and maintains proper etiquette and military decorum during ceremonies, meetings and social events. It further establishes boundaries for maintaining professional relationships with distinguished visitors during official visits.

2. Policy

2.1. Commanders will be supported in the planning and execution of official functions and in elements related to hosting distinguished visitors, either by assigned protocol personnel or assigned project officers with guidance from the appropriate protocol office in accordance with this directive and governing Air Force Instructions (AFI).

2.2. Official functions and the hosting of distinguished visitors will be planned and executed to reflect the professionalism of Air Force members and honor the customs, courtesies and traditions of the United States Air Force. Appropriate honors and courtesies will be extended at all times and on all occasions with due deference to position, title, and rank precedence.

2.3. Military funerals and memorials will be planned and executed in a dignified manner that reflects the personal wishes and sensitivities of the family, while remaining in concert with the professionalism of the Air Force and honoring the historical customs and traditions of the United States and the United States Air Force.

3. Responsibilities under this policy directive are set forth below:
 - 3.1. The Director of Services (HQ AF/ILV) establishes protocol policy, advocates for resources, and provides oversight.
 - 3.2. Air Force Protocol (HQ AF/CVAP) develops operational protocol guidance.
 - 3.3. MAJCOM, DRU, and FOA commanders, and the Chief, National Guard Bureau, may issue supplemental instructions specific to their protocol operations provided they support the goals of the United States Air Force.
 - 3.4. Commanders implement quality protocol programs, identify requirements, and execute their programs in compliance with this policy and governing AFIs.
4. Protocol duties and responsibilities vary and are often commander-driven. They include formulating and executing detailed plans for commander-hosted official functions and Distinguished Visitor (DV) visits. Protocol officers may also advise executive office staffs and subordinate units, if applicable, on protocol policy and procedures.
5. See [Attachment 1](#) for Glossary of References and Supporting Information.

PETER B. TEETS
Acting Secretary of the Air Force

Attachment 1**GLOSSARY OF REFERENCES AND SUPPORTING INFORMATION*****References***

United States Code, Title 4, chapter 1, “*The Flag and Seal, Seat of Government and the States of the United States.*”

United States Code, Title 36, Subtitle 1, Part A, chapters 1 and 3, “*Patriotic and National Observances and Organizations.*”

Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence memorandum

AFPD 37-1, *Information Management*

AFMAN 37-123, *Management of Records*

Terms

Distinguished Visitor (DV)—(1) Any general or flag officer, (2) any government official with rank equivalent to a brigadier general or higher, or (3) any foreign military officer or civilian designated a DV by the Deputy Under Secretary of the Air Force for International Affairs (SAF/IA). At times, persons of lower rank but appointed to or filling certain positions, may be accorded DV status. The purpose of the visit will determine if DV status should be accorded. For example, a civic leader may be accorded DV status. The commander determines the DV distinction on an individual basis. The Air Force Senior Leader Management Office publishes a relative rank list for active duty general officers and a civilian senior executive roster with DV codes for senior civilians. Consult the most current Department of Defense (DoD) Order of Precedence and Air Force Precedence List to determine current and correct precedence of distinguished visitors. These lists are available from HQ USAF/CVAP at 703-697-7621, DSN 227-7621, or by email at AF/CVAP@pentagon.af.mil

Official Function - A—ny ceremony or event where senior members are operating in an official capacity with members under their command or as a host to outside members. This includes, but is not limited to, official meetings and conferences, official promotions, reenlistment and retirement ceremonies, changes of command and reorganization events, and funerals.

Official Social Function—An event where senior Air Force members or senior civilian personnel are operating in an official capacity commensurate with their position to build or reinforce relationships with counterparts, government and civic officials, international visitors, or unit members.

Protocol Officer—Officers, civilians and enlisted members filling protocol positions. Protocol officers work special projects requiring an understanding of international, diplomatic or political sensitivity for individuals and groups representing a variety of politics, cultures, nationalities, and religions.